

Agee Jeopardized Citizens, U.S. Argues

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The Carter administration said yesterday it revoked the passport of former CIA officer Philip Agee because his alleged identification of CIA agents abroad exposed U.S. citizens and embassies to attack.

In a court hearing, Justice Department lawyer Glen V. Whitaker said Agee's activities "are particularly harmful in the situation that exists today" in Iran, but he said the passport was not revoked only because of reports Agee was going to the Middle Eastern nation.

Whitaker asked U.S. District Court Judge Gerhard A. Gesell to uphold the passport revocation ordered Dec. 23 by Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance. Agee, who lives in Hamburg, West Germany, filed suit to have his travel authority restored.

Whitaker argued that Agee's travel is "intimately connected to the harm he's causing to the national security and foreign policy. Agee has held press conferences and announced names of persons he said were CIA employees. He's subjecting them to physical harm and subjecting the embassies to attack."

In addition to his news conference announcements, Agee, 44, has written a book—"Inside the Company: CIA Diary"—which allegedly exposed CIA activities.

Agee's lawyer, Melvin Wulf, told Gesell that Vance acted after receiving reports Agee might travel to Iran in an effort to free U.S. hostages there. The Iranian government has been especially critical of CIA activities in Iran under the deposed shah.

"The claim that Mr. Agee was going to Iran was a false claim," Wulf said. "He had no intention of going to Iran as long as the hostages are held."